

REMARKS

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. By way of the Amendment, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 13-18 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claim 3 was previously cancelled. Claims 4, 7-12 and 19-21 are currently pending in the instant application. Claims 7-9, and 19-21 have been amended. Claims 4, 8-12, 19, and 21 are independent. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Specifically, claims 4 and 10-12 have been allowed, and claims 8, 9, 19, and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

By way of this amendment, each of claims 8, 9, 19, and 21 has been written in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of independent claim 6 (claim 6 has been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph).

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 15 and 18 because of informalities. In order to overcome this objection, the Applicant has cancelled claims 15 and 18. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 6-9 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In order to overcome this rejection, the Applicant has amended each of claims 8, 9, 19, and 21 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, which has been amended to correct the deficiency specifically pointed out by the Examiner. Claims 7 and 20 have been amended to depend from claim 8. The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 5, and 13-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Lee (U.S. Patent No. 5,546,134) in view of Christoff et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,518,998).

Claims 6 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Ueda. (U.S. 5,572,253) in view of Christoff et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,518,998).

Claim 7 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Ueda in view of Christoff et al., and further in view of Eino (U.S. Patent No. 6,120,435). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted above, and while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 13-18 have been cancelled, and each of objected-to claims 8, 9, 19, and 21 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of independent claim 6. (Note that the subject matter of claim 6 added to each of claims 8, 9, 19, and 20 has been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.)

Therefore, independent claims 8, 9, 19, and 21 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 7 and 20 have been amended from claim 8, and therefore are in condition for allowance.

Claims 4 and 10-12 have been allowed.

Accordingly, all of the claims of the present application should be allowed.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Carl T. Thomsen, Registration No. 50,786 at (703) 208-4030 (direct line) in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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